

# Stepping Into Freedom

***Beginning the Journey of Lasting Freedom***

 **NewHeart***Ministries*





I will give you a New Heart  
with New and Right Desires,  
and I will put a New Spirit in you.  
Ezekiel 36:26 TLB

## Welcome!

Welcome to New Heart Healing and Recovery! We're glad you are here tonight.

## The Healing and Recovery Group

The group in which you are participating tonight is not a support group, a class, a 12-Step group, or a Bible Study. This is a Healing and Recovery Group.

As you participate in this group, you will have the opportunity to express your concerns and experiences around topics and issues affecting your recovery. You will be offered the invaluable opportunity to find healing for your issues; to experience personally the reality of the Father's promise: "I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you." (Ezekiel 36:26 . TLB).

You will maximize your Healing and Recovery Group experience by following these simple guidelines:

1. Participate honestly. Tell the truth.
2. Don't preach. Use "I Statements." Avoid "You Should Statements."
3. Do the work. This is your healing and recovery.
4. Respect group members. Maintain confidentiality.

## Your Guidebook

Your New Heart Healing and Recovery Guidebook has been prayerfully designed to assist you in understanding and personally interacting with each of the key topics and issues affecting your recovery and healing.

Throughout the Guidebook, you will notice two icons:



The green pencil and paper icon indicates it's time for you to respond to the information presented. Be honest.



The purple speaking icon invites you to stop and process the information with your Healing and Recovery Group.

Each Guidebook is designed to offer information for multiple Group sessions.



Your Healing and Recovery Guidebook has two key parts:

1. The Issue

The recovery journey presents many issues for the one sincerely committed to live a life free and whole: denial, "stinkin thinkin", shame, and many more.

2. The Truth

Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (John 8:35). We will guide you in responding to every issue with Truth that will set free.



# Two Pathways

Stepping into Freedom begins with the acceptance that you have no control over your addiction; the acceptance that you no longer have control over the use of your “drug of choice.” Choosing a pathway marked by a desire to control your own recovery will inevitably lead to relapse. Choosing a pathway marked with dependence on Jesus will lead to healing and wholeness and freedom.

## The Self-Determined Pathway



## The Christ-Dependent Pathway



**Relapse**

**FREEDOM**

Process with your group the following:



- Why is admitting that I can no longer control my use of my “drug of choice” so difficult?
- What has been your experience on the “Self-Determined Pathway?”
- What has been your experience on the “Christ-Dependent Pathway?”
- How important is it to fall passionately in love with Jesus? Why?
- How does love for Jesus affect my ability to sustain a life of “clean and sober?”

# Genuine or Fake?



ROLEX?



GUCCI?



AIR JORDANS?

## Have You Ever Been Ripped Off?

Some buy counterfeit or pirated products intentionally. It simply doesn't matter to them whether the watch or purse or shoes they are buying are genuine; or, simply look genuine.

But, imagine spending \$500 of your money on what you believe is an authentic \$5000 Rolex watch, only to discover the watch is a counterfeit.

You feel "ripped off," taken, duped, scammed.

In fiscal year 2010, 19,959 seizures of counterfeit and pirated goods with a total domestic value of \$188.1 million and a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$1.4 billion were intercepted before entering the United States.

Cigarettes were the top product in this category.

China continues to be the number one source country for counterfeit and pirated goods seized in fiscal year 2010, accounting for 66 percent or \$124 million of the total seizure value.

For the fifth year in a row, footwear was the top product seized, accounting for 24 percent of the entire domestic value of IPR infringing goods.

Intellectual Property Rights Division of the Department of Homeland Security



Write your response to the following:

How does it feel to be "ripped off?"  
What emotions are stirred up in reaction to the experience?

---

---

---

---



Process the following with your group:

- How does it happen? How do we get "ripped off?"
- Have you ever been scammed ("ripped off") by the same person more than once? How does that experience make you feel?

*For there are a lot of rebels out there, full of loose, confusing, and deceiving talk.*

*Titus 1:10a*

# Freedom or Freedom?



FREEDOM IS NOTHING BUT A CHANCE TO BE BETTER. ALBERT CAMUS



Check all the definitions that best describe your understanding of freedom.

- Freedom means I am able to do what I want to do as long as I want to do it.
- Freedom means there is no one telling me what I can or cannot do.
- Freedom is simply the absence of restraint, or control.
- Religion is simply an organized effort to take away my freedom.
- I should be free to do my “drug of choice” as long as I don’t hurt anyone.

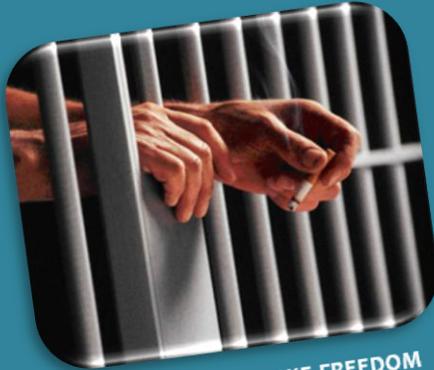


Process the following with your group:

- Share your definitions of freedom with your group.
- Look carefully at the three sets of photos above. Then, respond to the following:
  - What do the large photos illustrate?
  - What is the story behind each of the smaller photos?
  - Is there a relationship between a large photo and the smaller photo directly below it? What is that relationship?
- What do these photos tell us about “freedom” as some have defined it?

*They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.  
2 Peter 2:19 (NIV)*

# Can You Tell the Difference?



LOCKED INSIDE A FAKE FREEDOM



STEPPING INTO REAL FREEDOM

## Definition of Freedom

*Dictionary.com* defines “freedom” as follows:

1. The state of being free or at liberty rather than in confinement or under physical restraint.
2. Exemption from external control, interference, regulation, etc.
3. The power to determine action without restraint.
4. Personal liberty, as opposed to bondage or slavery.

## Freedom or Freedom?

Some “freedom” is hollow. It looks like freedom. As we listen to our friends and family, it even sounds like the type of freedom we have wanted for a long time. But, like a Rolex watch with no inner workings, it’s hollow freedom. As a matter of fact, it’s not freedom at all. It’s bondage; a prison.

A life imprisoned inside an addiction often begins with “buying” the counterfeit truth that alcohol or drugs can free us from pain, guilt, shame, stress... “dealing with life on life’s terms.”



Read the “Definition of Freedom” carefully. What are the most important words in that definition?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Do the words you selected in the “Definition of Freedom” apply to your experience with alcohol and drugs?  
Why | Why Not

---

---

---

---

---

---



Process your above responses with your group.

# Freedom or Freedom?

We've been "ripped off," scammed, duped, taken.

- **Louis' Story**

"Louis started using drugs to escape himself. He began mainlining heroin at age 19 and eventually became addicted to cocaine as well. Like many other addicts, Louis, now 40, says his drug dependence snuck up on him. "I didn't choose to become an addict. I chose to experiment, to escape." Drug abuse, he adds, helped him cope with anger, anomie, and feelings of powerlessness. (Even before trying heroin, he had a troubled life: Running away from his Camden, New Jersey, home at 16, he ended up on the streets of New York and joined a gang before being sent to prison for 18 months.)" | Moyers on Addiction . PBS Online

- **Wendy's Story**

Drinking became her consuming passion. Once she stopped going to school, she became a regular vodka drinker. No longer just a weekend partier, she began drinking routinely. "At sixteen, to be out of school was like freedom . . . freedom to drink and freedom to party. Wendy says becoming an alcoholic is comparable to falling in love. "You don't know that it's beginning to take a priority, except one day you wake up and you know you've got to have it, because you can't function [without it]. . . . But then it fools you, because you know you only need to take the one, but then you take that one, and, boom, you want more."

"Addictions,' says Joseph Frascella, .... at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 'are repetitive behaviors in the face of negative consequences, the desire to continue something you know is bad for you.'"



Read Louis' story. What was Louis looking for in drugs? Why did he begin using? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did Louis get what he was looking for? What did he get?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read Wendy's story. What motivated Wendy to start drinking? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did Wendy get the freedom she sought in alcohol? What did she get? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Process the following with your group:

- How common are the stories of Louis and Wendy?
- Read 2 Peter 2:19 (ESV)  
*"They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved."*
  - Who's "they?"  
Louis had a "they:" someone or some group of individuals that "sold" him on the freedom he could find in drugs.  
Who do you think was Wendy's "they?"
  - Who is your "they?"

# Two Types of Freedom



FORTRESSED FREEDOM



FREEDOM IN CHRIST

## Life on Life's Terms

“Dealing with life on life’s terms.”

Anyone who has spent any time in recovery has bumped into this phrase. It is, in fact, the primary prescription for maintaining “serenity.” Simply put, it means accepting life as it comes; “going with the flow.”

“Dealing with Life on Life’s Terms” means living life in such a way that I am free from the negative effects of stress, controlling-manipulating people, and deep emotional pain. It means I am able to live free from the nagging torment of guilt and shame.

But, for many in recovery, freedom equals control. Their reasoning is simple: “If I can control the people, places and things in my life, I can be free.” Fortressed Freedom.



JON

*“You talk about freedom, but you have no idea the pressure I’m under. The stress is crushing at times. Alcohol helps me “notch-down” the stress level.”*



TIFFANY

*“If I had freedom from my controlling boss and abusive husband, I’d be O.K. Oh, just leave me alone. I can handle this.”*



Look carefully at the two images above.

How is life in an addiction similar to living in a fortress?

---



---



---



---



---

What is the primary difference between trying control freedom from the fortress and the freedom found in relationship with Jesus Christ?

---



---



---



---



---



- Process your responses above with your group.
- Read the comments of Jon and Tiffany. How common are those feelings?

- What is Jon trying to control in the fortress?
- How does Tiffany define freedom?

# Life in the Fortress

CONTROL ALL THE PEOPLE  
LIVING WITHIN THE  
FORTRESS

CRAVINGS CONTROL  
THOUGHTS

CONTROL WHO HAS  
ACCESS TO THE FORTRESS



LIFE IN THE ADDICTION

ALLOW INTO THE FORTRESS  
ONLY THOSE PEOPLE  
I CAN CONTROL

CONTROL WHO KNOWS WHAT  
CONTROL HOW MUCH  
INFORMATION IS SHARED

SMALL, RESTRICTED WORLD

## “Controlled Freedom”

### Two Levels of Control



#### Level One: Life in the Addiction

For the alcoholic or drug addict who has “bought the idea” that “drinkin’ and druggin’” is “freedom,” *Life in the Fortress* (Life in the Addiction) is characterized by control.

- **Brain Chemistry**  
Each morning, the alcoholic or drug addict faces the control of the craving that dominates every thought throughout the day. As the addiction progresses, the intensity of the control increases as brain chemistry changes. The control of the “drug of choice” intensifies as more and more of the drug of choice is required.



What or who do you feel you must control to maintain your use of your “drug of choice?”

---



---

How would you describe the “freedom” you’ve exercised in your use of alcohol and drugs?

---



---



---



---

What level of control are you in currently?  
\_\_\_ I am attempting to control access to my “drug of choice,” the people closest to me, and the circumstances in my life.

\_\_\_ I’ve experienced enough negative consequences, as a result of my “using.” I recognize I have to “cut back” on my use. Recovery helps.



Process your responses to the above questions with your group.

“Praise the Lord. O my soul and forget not all His benefits - Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.” | Psalm 103:2-3



# “Let Go and Let God”



## The Brave Trapeze Artist

Anyone who has watched an aerialist (a trapeze artist) perform has undoubtedly experienced that “hold your breath moment” when the aerialist lets go of the bar of one trapeze, turns around in mid-air, and grasps the hands of her partner who swung out to her – upside down – on the other trapeze. For the unusually brave trapeze artists, the feat is performed with the absence of a safety net below.

“Let go and let God,” has been, for some in recovery, like letting go of a trapeze bar in mid-air. Letting go of the bar, turning around and taking hold of a waiting partner can be so frightening, many choose to stay in their addiction rather than risk surrendering their control to God. For them, the “what if’s” become so compelling, they settle for “repeating the same behavior” (swinging back and forth on the trapeze) rather than place their faith in God.

No one would be foolish enough to let go of a trapeze bar, turn around in mid-air and look for the strong hands of a partner unless they were confident that their partner was willing and able to catch them. The aerial feat requires faith.



Look at the image of the two trapeze artists above. Just for a moment, put yourself in the place of the trapeze artist to the left:

- What does it take to “let go” of the trapeze bar? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Would you let go? Why | Why not?

---

---

---

---



Process with your group:

What does the very familiar phrase “Let Go and Let God” actually mean?

What would it mean for you to “Let Go and Let God?”

Are you ready to “Let Go and Let God?”  
If not, why not?

# Freedom in Christ

FREEDOM FROM THE GUILT  
OF MY PAST

FREEDOM FROM SHAME

FREEDOM FROM THE  
COMPULSIVE NEED TO  
CONTROL



FREEDOM IN CHRIST

PEACE FROM THE INSIDE

AUTHENTIC JOY

SELF-CONTROL

HOPE

A FUTURE

## Jesus Came to Set You Free

Jesus wants you. He longs for you to belong to Him exclusively. He desires you to live free and whole and strong.

He announced that desire in a synagogue one day during the course of his 3½ years of ministry on earth.

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” | Luke 4:18-19

Jesus emptied Himself of His glory (Philippians 2) and came to be born of a virgin in a manger in Bethlehem to bring Good News to the poor.

- “Poor” are those that are simply without resource. They have used up every possible income source; every source of help. They are poor.
- “Good News” is that Jesus came to “seek and to save” those without resource.

Jesus submitted Himself to the cruelty and ultimate crucifixion of the Romans to proclaim freedom for prisoners.



Jesus identified four (4) specific types of people that were the focus of His ministry on earth:

- The Poor

Do you qualify as someone who is without resource; someone who has “burned his bridges” to help? Why?

---

---

---

- The Prisoners

Would you consider yourself free or imprisoned? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

- The Blind

Denial is an unwillingness to see the truth about our addiction. What do you think Jesus wants you to see?

---

---

- The Oppressed

Like slaves, the oppressed are those who are under the cruel control of someone or something greater than themselves. Are you oppressed? How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

- “Prisoners” are those locked away in the “Fortress of their Addiction.” They are those imprisoned in the false belief that they must control the people, places and things in their lives in order to be free. Their addiction locks them behind the invisible bars of their cravings.
- The freedom available in Christ is freedom from ourselves; freedom from our fortress. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* | 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Freedom in Christ is a freedom from the blindness that has kept us locked away in the denial of our addiction.

*“I will rescue you from your own people...<sup>18</sup> to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”* | Acts 26:17-18 (NIV)

The freedom found in Jesus alone is freedom from demonic oppression.

- Satan has no power over the disciple of Jesus Christ except that which the disciple gives him.
- The alcoholic or drug addict makes himself vulnerable to Satan by making choices in violation of God’s heart and His Word. The Bible calls those choices sin.
- It is the presence of that sin in the mind and heart of the alcoholic and addict that gives Satan a legal right to operate in a believer’s life.

That comes in the form of oppression:

- Torment of the mind
- Agitation of the spirit
- Dark thoughts; dark feelings

Only Jesus can break the power of demonic oppression. Because of the cross, every oppressive spirit must submit to the name of Jesus.

## The Truth About Freedom

### 1 Peter 2:16 (NIV)

*“Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.”*

### James 1:22-25 (The Message)

<sup>22-24</sup> *“Don’t fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don’t act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.<sup>25</sup> But whoever catches a glimpse of the God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action.”*

### Galatians 5:1 (The Message)

*“Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you.”*

### 2 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV)

<sup>17</sup> *“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”*

### Romans 6:16-18 (The Message)

*“You know well enough from your own experience that there are some acts of so-called freedom that destroy freedom. Offer yourselves to sin, for instance, and it’s your last free act. But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. All your lives you’ve let sin tell you what to do. But thank God you’ve started listening to a new master, one whose commands set you free to live openly in his freedom!”*

# the Truth and the Issue

Then, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free  
- John 8:32 -

## THE TRUTH



Stop and think about the truth you discovered as you processed through this material. Record what you believe is the truth about:

- Freedom

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Freedom in Christ

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- Lasting Healing and Sustainable Freedom

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## THE ISSUE



Stop and think about the issues that are keeping you locked inside your Fortress of Freedom. What keeps you from “Letting Go and Letting God?”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Are there issues that are keeping you from becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ? What are those issues?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

